Forever Bound: Two Best Friends from VBM School.

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My initial close friendship at VBM school was with Pradeep, who was also the first male student I interacted with. I remember during sixth grade end, there was a situation where he seemed upset with Ramya, and I inquired about it. Unfortunately, he didn't respond to my question.

A few days later, I called him to speak with prashanth, but he didn't even turn to look at me. Prashanth mentioned that I was calling him, to which he responded dismissively with the statement "ava kedakura poda" (leave her). It was a hurtful moment for me.The following day, as usual, I found myself alone in the class. That's when a girl named Kerthana approached me and informed me that Pradeep had apologized to me. I turned to look at him and motioned for him to speak, but he quickly ran away😆. It was a hilarious moment, and that's when our friendship truly began. I returned to school three months after my surgery, and during that time, I started using a tube to protect myself from back pain and bed sores.

A Helpful Gesture from Pradeep and a Developing Friendship:

JP Sir instructed Pradeep to carry my bag to class, which initially made me feel embarrassed that a guy was helping me with my belongings. However, he was the first person to offer me assistance, and I appreciated it. Towards the end of our seventh grade, Pradeep transferred to Joseph school, where Prici was also enrolled. I used to talk about Pradeep to Prici, and that's how they got introduced. Despite his transfer to another

school, I never forgot to send him a “good morning” text. During those days, I only had 10 free messages, and I didn’t have a message booster. I would occasionally call him and speak to him during church. Interestingly, his parents spoke to me more than he did.

Reestablishing a Close Bond with Pradeep And Getting to Know Koti Sai Jaganath Rao:

On rainy days, my father would change his route to school, which passed by Pradeep’s house. And whenever I hoped to see him, he would magically appear. I would always greet him with a smile and a “hai.” We were very decent back then, not speaking much or discussing unnecessary things. We maintained a respectful friendship☺.

Once, he visited me along with Koti Sai and Prasanna. I even drew a map of my house to show him. I introduced him to my parents, and it was a pleasant encounter.

Then, on the 10th grade, we lost contact for a while, but I still made sure to text him a “good morning.” During our public exams, I asked him to meet me in the class before the exam, and he arrived with a group of friends, including Prasanna, Shyam, Niranjan, and others, whom Prici often mentioned. It was Pradeep who introduced me to Prasanna.

As our public exams approached, our bond was reestablished, and we became close once again. It made me proud when people in my class referred to me as “Pradeep’s best friend.” to others.

And now, let’s talk about Koti Sai Jaganath Rao. I knew a guy named Koti in my class, but we didn’t interact much until the 8th grade. I had even spoken to his sister, Hemalatha akka, but not with him.

I remember that he once borrowed money from me to celebrate Teachers’ Day and later collected money from other students to return it to me. That’s when our conversations began. Koti is a very active person, and during those days, he was super hyperactive, which I found quite amusing. Initially, he didn’t treat me with much respect and would scold me, but not in an offensive way. He interacted with me differently.

As the student pupil leader (SPL), he would come to class early every day. When he arrived, he would sit in front of me, hold my hands, and we would engage in silly conversations.

Although he was supposed to be on the school stage during prayer, he would often spend some extra time in our class before eventually making his way to the stage. He never left me alone, and he didn’t mind jumping from the stage to our class, which was quite amusing. During the revision exams, when students were sent upstairs, he would still come to our class three times: once to give me an answer paper, once to give me a question paper, and once to get me a thread on every unit exams. He would then collect my answer sheets and return them to the teachers. It may seem like small gestures, but these details meant a lot to me and showed his support☺.

I used to call him Koti, but whenever we had disagreements or fights, I would retaliate by calling him Sai. Interestingly, he had no idea how to draw diagrams, so whenever he needed to create a diagram for his record, he would rely on me. If the diagram didn’t look good, he would ask me to redraw it until he was satisfied. I would happily redraw it multiple times just to meet his expectations. In a way, he had a bit of authority over me in those instances.

As we transitioned to high school, we both went through changes, but our friendship remained strong. Koti Sai continued to be a close friend of mine.

"Sorry for everything"; *it was the last statement I received from him before we parted ways.*

I must mention Keerthana, a junior girl who holds a special place in my memories. We would spend time together every day after she finished her lunch. What I admired about her was that she never treated me as a superior or someone to be looked up to. She would often engage in friendly fights with my classmates because it went against the school rules for juniors and seniors to interact. Keerthana had a carefree and independent spirit, and I appreciated that about her😘.

I also got to know a few other students from her class, such as Pushpa Anjali, R. Vinoth, who happened to be one of my classmates, Chaya, Rama Bharathi, and Vinoth Raj. Vinoth Raj was known for his good looks. Additionally, there was Akshay, Babitha's brother, who also became a part of our interactions and formed a connection with us.

“Hand in hand, through laughter and tears, two best friends from VBM School, a bond that perseveres.”